

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for cleaving a protein or peptide at a specific site, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the method comprises the steps:

- constructing at a predetermined cleavage site of the protein or peptide an amino acid sequence of 2 to 20 amino acids, wherein the amino acid sequence comprises $X_1 X_1$ or repeats thereof ~~or two or more repeats of $X_1 Y_n$~~ , wherein $[[n=1,]]$ X_1 is His ~~and Y_n is any amino acid~~, and said amino acid sequence is cleavable in the presence of free metal ions, said amino acid sequence does not exist naturally in the protein or peptide to be cleaved; and
- allowing said protein or peptide to react with the metal ion in a buffer, said buffer further comprising a reducing or oxidizing agent or agents.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~claim 2~~ claim 1, wherein the length of the amino acid sequence is 2 to 10 amino acids, ~~preferably 4 to 8 amino acids~~.

3. – 4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the amino acid sequence comprises a sequence selected from the group consisting of (His)₂, (His)₄ (SEQ ID NO:28), (His)₆ (SEQ ID NO:29), and (His)₈ (SEQ ID NO:30) ~~and His-Ser-His-Ala-His-Gly-His-Ala-His-Ser-His-Gly (SEQ ID NO:9)~~.

6. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 1, wherein the metal ion is ~~a ion~~ an ion of a transition metal ~~selected from the group of transition metals, preferably from the group comprising Cu, Co, Ni, Fe, Mn, Cd, Pd, Rh, Ru, Pt, Cr and Zn.~~

7. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 13, wherein the transition metal ion is ~~a ion of a metal selected from the group comprising~~ consisting of Cu, Co, Mn, Cr, Ni, Fe and Zn, ~~preferably from the group comprising Cu and Co.~~

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the metal ion is a ion of Cu.

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the protein to be cleaved is a recombinant protein.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the amino acid sequence is constructed at a predetermined cleavage site by genetic engineering methods.

11. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of a reagent selected from the group ~~comprising~~ consisting of hydrogen peroxide, ascorbate and dithiothreitol, or in the presence of a combination of these reagents.

12. **(New)** The method according to claim 2, wherein the length of the amino acid sequence is 4 to 8 amino acids.

13. **(New)** The method according to claim 6, wherein said transition metal is selected from the group consisting of Cu, Co, Ni, Fe, Mn, Cd, Pd, Rh, Ru, Pt, Cr and Zn.

14. **(New)** The method according to claim 7, wherein said transition metal is selected from Cu or Co.